



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE SCHOOL REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

VOLUME VI
NUMBER 7

SEPTEMBER, 1898

WHOLE
NUMBER 57

HOW TO MAKE THE STUDY OF LITERATURE INTERESTING¹

PLEASE understand from the outset that the question is not by any means, how to *enforce* the study of literature. Such a question would be, in reality, no question at all. Any teacher inured to the habit of demanding and securing obedience may require the reading of this and that, may examine in writing or orally, and may mark the quality of the answers. To such a procedure the college requirements in English offer special temptation. But the more enforcement, the less interest. The teacher who is debarred the privilege of choosing the thing that will interest, but is compelled to consult catalogues to see what he must put his classes through, is hampered from the start and is reduced to doing the best he can.

This word *interest* was always in daily use in education, even before the study of Herbart came into vogue and gave to the conception of "many-sided interest" a fresh sanction. During the Herbart season we heard it perpetually. It was a term we could all understand, when much of the philosophy called Herbartian beclouded and teased our minds. Perhaps this word did more to win adherents to this philosophy than any formal principle which the philosophy had to announce. But Herbartianism went out of vogue, had its day, like all the enthusiasms that lift us now and then above our normal level.

¹ Read before the Friends' Teachers' Association, in Philadelphia, February 5, 1898.

The scourge of the Herbartian philosophy was wielded by thinkers of other schools who charged it with failure to recognize the will. This reaction in favor of a system in which the will played a prominent part was caught by many who entertained it with an excess of zeal. Cultivation of the will being now the main thing, it followed that those studies which pupils least affect by nature are the ones through which they must most be pushed; and even that those studies to which they are led by natural inclination must be brought under a methodic that should go counter to their mental grain.

With the decline of the Herbartian pedagogy, declined also the general estimate of interest, both the idea and the school procedures to which it led. The old conception of Latin, Greek and mathematics as the great staple of juvenile discipline always comes to the front when the importance of the training of the will grows large in pedagogical theorizing. Nothing else equals these old disciplines in remoteness from all relation to actual life in church, society and state. No suspicion of utility can possibly vitiate their cultural value. The only forward looking to which they tempt the schoolboy is the prospect of examination. No other drawings from without, no anticipations of pleasurable literary communings in the future, no wellings of love and wonder from within, interfere with the plain enforcement of scholastic line and rule.

The classical preparatory teacher, if he thinks of his Latin and Greek texts as anything more than matter prescribed for examination, thinks of them as materials for training, and leaves it to the college professor to treat them as portions of literature. Old prepossessions and old superstitions always concede to Latin and Greek the primacy among the studies of a set course. These studies dominate ambitions, and become the determinants of scholarship. They offer their own method, as a ready-made article, to the modern elements with which the course has been enriched. Some of the modern elements, as, for instance, the mechanic arts, and, generally speaking, the banausic matters that will creep into education in spite of the contempt felt for them by the humanists, have so little relation to scholarship

pure and simple, that the classicists cannot come at them and show them how to proceed. But the modern languages are obviously akin to the ancient; and so the preparatory French and German, in spite of Sauveur and the other devotees of naturalism, are still very much like preparatory Latin and Greek, and are taught with very much the same efficiency as regards mastery and insight.

When English began to be important enough to place its name in programmes and to command respect as a branch of learning, English also was found fit for naturalization in the humanistic state. Thus it came to pass that English was brought within the generally prevalent conception of a disciplinary gymnastic, and English literature came to be treated like the ancient literatures, rather with the view of sharpening critical wits than of awakening love and admiration. As ancient texts had to be annotated by the profoundest scholars before they could be imposed as tasks on juvenile minds, so modern texts are universally annotated, not because there is any inherent necessity that they should be so treated, but because we are all thoroughly used to annotation.

Dependence on notes is a modern pedagogical vice, one of the sequelae of the great pedagogical disease of examinationism. No one, youth or adult, ever read with abandon, with relish, with eager curiosity, a book or a story or a poem plus a body of notes. A young person has to be made ready for an examination; time is precious; a definite allotment of reading must be accomplished, and provision made for answering sundry questions. The situation is wholly unnatural and factitious. Nobody ever reads in this way except boys and girls under scholastic compulsion. Nobody ever remembers such reading with any emotion except horror. Fortunate the youth whom such procedures do not permanently alienate from the pursuit of good literature!

Fitting for college in English literature introduces into the task of the English teacher insuperable difficulties. The greater mass of secondary pupils, who have no ambitions involving entrance examinations, offer us a free field. In the interests of these we may solve and elaborate our theories. Let us consider

how these pupils, not destined for examination, may profit best, during their years of adolescence, by the instruction we may give them in the literature of their native language. An attempt is making to unify the entire English work of the secondary schools by bringing it all within the forms of the college requirements. These forms have the advantage of being clearly outlined, being in fact mechanical prescriptions; and the non-preparatory methods have the disadvantage that they are not at all a prescription imposed *ab extra*, but an evolution which is not, and never will be, final and complete, and which is perpetually evolving out of existing needs and conditions. I do not know that non-preparatory English teachers have ever appointed committees to consider purely and simply, *i. e.*, without taking any thought whatever for impending examinations, the real, vital questions of literature teaching. These questions teachers are left to solve each for himself. The condition is altogether natural and wholesome. To level all English teaching under the college forms would tend to check investigation, to lessen the feeling of responsibility, to restrict freedom in adapting means to ends. The genuine teacher's desire is to order his work so as to produce in the largest possible measure genuine results of culture. The preparatory teacher's desire is to meet the demands of an examination. The incompatibility is irreconcilable.

Let me be regarded as attempting to make a contribution to the pedagogy of English literature—to discuss its real, natural questions, not its artificial ones.

The fundamental questions of the subject are of course,—what is literature, and why do we teach it in our schools.

English literature we may briefly and provisionally define as that body of writings, couched in forms that please by virtue of beauty, grace, or strength, in which the race has expressed its religious, its emotional, and its intellectual vicissitudes. History, in its narrower sense—for in its wider meaning it includes everything that has been said or done on this planet—records, sometimes in dry chronicle and sometimes in story touched with emotion, the institutional vicissitudes through which the race has passed, and explains how we came to be the nation that we

are, how we came to have the government under which we live, and the civilization that we enjoy. History has to include literature and record its achievements; but literature has its own standing for the reason that it acknowledges fealty to the imagination, and seeks for beauty, while history is science, seeks for fact, and criticises speech as announcing what actually happened.

Now we shall agree that the ideal function of education, as distinguished from its utilitarian aims, is to bring the individual soul as fully as possible into intelligent relation with the life of the race. In truth, education may be well defined as the effort which each generation makes to qualify its successor to administer the inheritance which this successor is about to receive. The really great and unanswerable argument for the study of Latin and Greek is not the argument of mental discipline—for disciplinary materials are numerous—but the consideration of the historical value of these languages as reflecting an important stage in the development of humanity. Every self-respecting man is interested in his ancestors. He treasures heirlooms. He is eager to know what sort of men and women his progenitors were. He asks about their employments, their houses, their religion, their education. He attends the church which his ancestors founded, and never becomes so much an agnostic as not to honor the Bible which they believed. As he reads the old Bible, so he reads also the old books in which his ancestors found their solace, their amusement—on which they trained their minds for argument on affairs of church and state—in which they found satisfaction of their love of beauty. We cannot easily fill our houses with the dear old bric-a-brac. But the old books, ever old, are also ever new, and are always with us. The generous-minded youth, whose education has not been in vain, applies his first earnings to the purchase of a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Pope, a Johnson, a Cowper, a Wordsworth. The spiritual traits of his forefathers were determined very largely by these writers, and the strain has been transmitted to him. He was born a lover of his native classics. It is for education to develop this noble strain. Where these ancestral influences

do not exist at all, the task of education is more elementary and more difficult, but by no means is it hopeless.

If, therefore, you go with me in thus viewing literature as the main link that binds the present spiritually with the past; and if you accept the thesis that education chiefly aims to unfold in the individual the consciousness of his relations to all humanity and to all human achievements, you perceive at once the kind of purpose with which literature must be taught. Surely it must not be taught as those things are from which youth are glad to be forever emancipated when school days are over. Surely it must not be made a task of memory, a procedure which guarantees with absolute certainty that it shall not be remembered. It must not be taught as an opportunity for criticism, to illustrate rhetoric or to develop mental acumen. The teacher's purpose in literature must ever be to awaken love for his subject, to make the study pleasing and memorable, to plant seeds of good desires in soil which he has made good by wise husbandry.

Grant this principle as fundamental to the teaching of literature, and we see at once how it affects certain methods deeply imbedded in the pedagogic consciousness. In the first place, it prohibits formal examinations. Observe, I say, *formal examinations*; by which expression I mean examinations simultaneous and identical for masses of pupils, and intended to determine class rank, or perhaps promotion from class to class. Such examinations as these are inconsistent with real, spontaneous interest in any subject. Examination in the large sense—not the scholastic, technical one—is, of course, a main function of all teaching. Every pupil speaks and writes, furnishing thereby uncounted indications of his mental state. These the teacher perpetually notes. He watches for signs of lassitude, of flagging interest. He seeks to know something of the pupil's domestic environment, of his mental and physical habits. He comes to know the pupil so well that he cannot possibly come to know him better by the formality of a set examination.

But if anyone claims utility for the formal examination on the ground that it spurs the pupil to effort, I answer that the effort to which such examination stirs the pupil is merely an effort to

remember points, few in number, for a limited time, and that this time once passed, oblivion and neglect at once supervene, by a reaction as violent as the preceding strain has been intense. I am impressed more and more by this psychical fact, as I observe the work of schools and colleges that bend their energies to the maintenance of a rigid system of examinations. Action and reaction are equal. The tension of mind caused by the approach of the examination time is suddenly loosed when the examination is over and the marks are made known. Then follows the reaction, which, of course, is indifference; and indifference, the *acedia* of the seven deadly sins of the mediæval church, being mere deadness, has no natural and necessary reaction, but abides and enters into the character, killing aspiration, zeal, faith. I am not theorizing. Not to connect with their methods the indifference so notably characteristic of certain institutions of the higher education is impossible. This indifference is not natural to youth; it would seem indeed to be a vice that should find its victims among the old, the sluggish-minded, who know the vanity of human hopes, and look cynically upon young men's ambitions. But a régime of examinations is capable of engendering it even in pubescent youth, elastic as we know the spirits of youth to be, unquenchable as seems to us the fire of youthful hope.

Hence I say, omit the formal examination from the scheme of work in literature; and having thus cleared the ground for reasonable procedures, plan such methods as shall enlist the pupil's volition by stirring his emotional nature and making his reading of books and his learning about writers a pleasure and a recreation. We must remember, as a fact of primary importance to our planning, that every poet, every writer of essay, sermon, tract, or story, wrote for the purpose of pleasing, or instructing, or persuading his generation. Writings continue to be read, are read because they still continue to please, to instruct, to persuade. Therefore we have no right to thwart the great intent of literature by causing it to do anything else than that which its writers meant it should do. Above all things, we must make the study of literature pleasing; and literature that we cannot make

pleasing, either because of defects in our taste or knowledge, or because of our pupil's immaturity, we must let alone.

But in considering whether a masterpiece of literature is within our pupil's power of appreciation, we are apt to make a fatal mistake. The old demon of thoroughness lays his hand on us, and forthwith we expect the pupil to learn about a piece everything that can be known, to analyze it, paraphrase it, and, if it is verse, to prose it and make it ugly. No naïf reader ever analyzes or paraphrases; and children, even in secondary schools, are naïf readers. The natural recalcitrancy of their minds, for which they are not responsible, against analysis of beautiful and impressive wholes, makes them, to an unskillful pedagogy, seem culpably ignorant and delinquent. Many a child has picked up in the home library a Shakespeare, a Milton, a Bunyan, and has become absorbed with admiration, and, I will say, with appreciation, of the great literature. These children, you must observe, had no recitations to prepare for. Many things they did not understand. A naïf reader slides over such things with perfect ease, and not understanding them at first, comes to understand them at last, in the natural way, finding them *in situ*, and then finding them again and again. A student of Latin or Greek is spurred by his teacher to leave no minutest point unmastered. Therefore we find even bright youth looking up the same word fifty times. If our aim is to get up portions of text so as to answer questions of detail, whether verbal, or grammatical, or rhetorical, of course the great classics are immensely difficult, and far beyond the reach of children; but if our aim is simply to have the classic texts read with feeling, then, at least in selection, no epic or drama or lyric is forbidden our choice. Only extensive reading of good literature brings any person acquainted with the literary forms, the literary diction, the literary allusions, the references to history. Nothing is learned from notes in such sort as to become a permanent possession. A note usually tides over the immediate difficulty, and will have to be repeated when the same difficulty occurs a second time; but a difficulty occurring a second, a third time, often ceases to be a difficulty. The note was otiose. It enabled

the teacher to ask a pointed question and expect a pointed answer. But this was of no value. We must learn to let pupils mull over things. The young reader is again and again delighted and exultant to find today's reading explained by the reading of yesterday, of last week, last month, last year. A note telling him of the delicious associations that old classical scholars find in Milton, with Homer, with Virgil, with Dante does him no good. He has no business with any associations but his own; and even the child of ten years has literary associations of his own. Mother Goose and the fairy tales are perpetually recurring. Robinson Crusoe, the man Friday, the footprint on the shore still point many a moral and adorn many a tale.

The first duty of the teacher of literature is, therefore, to see that his pupils have abundant opportunities to read good books. Reading must begin early and must never cease. There is no central theory or doctrine of literature that may be mastered in a year or a term of a school course. The essential thing to aim at is the acquisition of a store of memorable reading. The teacher must know what the good books are, and must perpetually watch to assure himself that the books he recommends are really taking vital hold on minds. The danger to be dreaded is that reading grow perfunctory, a task done to please the teacher, not spontaneous, not impelled by inner motive. The teacher advises, stimulates, questions in the conversational manner, reproves in private, dissuades, allows for the languors and fallow times of nature, never marks, never scolds. This is a business that cannot be gauged and measured.

You will have perceived that what I have said implies out-of-school reading rather than the collective or gregarious reading that can be done in the class room. The class reading has its due function, as we shall presently see. But the cumulative, fruitful reading that brings gradual familiarity with great writings must be silent reading, done by each pupil for himself, in the solitude of the study-room or by the domestic hearth. As I contemplate the teacher as a literary mentor, I have, of course, to think of him, or her, as a person who knows books, and whose taste has been cultivated by familiarity with the best

I contemplate also easy access to books — a condition which the modern world is coming to realize. The literature teacher, gaining experience, will gradually come to know good books, good extracts, good poems. He will learn how to excerpt strong and pithy passages. He will not recommend the unabridged volume of Wordsworth, but will know what poems to recommend by title. He will not put into his pupil's hands a volume of Newman's sermons, but will direct attention to some one sermon, or to two. Thus the literature teacher must, step by step, make his own anthology. He becomes valuable just in proportion to the wisdom, the taste, the honesty of purpose, which he puts into the building up of his collection. He will have struck out of it any book, however dear to himself, that he finds has not, among his pupils, year after year, a genuine constituency ; or he will keep it in reserve against the happy time when some Sunday child shall appear in his flock, bringing, perhaps from a home of culture, a larger readiness of appreciation of the good things of literature.

I insist on this — that the teacher wields a far greater influence as adviser than he possibly can as mere drillmaster. It happens sometimes that a boy or girl has found an adviser, and is reading largely quite without relation to the school and its doings. But it is right to assume that, unless the teacher advises, the average youth will read quite at random, and will be attracted by taking titles. What have you read ? what are you reading now ? what book, of all you have read, do you like best ? why did you not like this or that ? These questions are of course asked in private. They constitute the veritable examination in literature. The answers to them reveal the workings of minds, the development of tastes. The answers given in the technical examinations reveal nothing but the data remembered up to that time. The private questions give you the basis for further reasonable procedures. The technical questions give you the basis for marks — marks, the bane of our school practice.

On no account will you adopt the ascetic notion that a book once begun must be read through to the end, or must be finished

at once, before anything else is begun. An author who does not hold his reader by his own power of interesting has no business to insist that readers shall stick to him by an effort of their will. All reading done from a sense of duty, without the participation of the emotions, is for a child worthless. The mature student of literature conceives that he must, for purposes of scholarship, read his Goldsmith, his Scott, his Johnson, his Wordsworth entire; but for the juvenile student of literature our sole function is to secure that he have lasting memories that are pleasing and a fair modicum of knowledge of Goldsmith, of Scott, of Johnson, of Wordsworth.

I cannot, of course, leave this part of my subject without a word as to the reading of fiction. Let us note that all our poetic literature is fiction, from Chaucer to Tennyson. Plato, you know, objected to poetry in the education of youth for the reason that it is fiction. But the world has never given heed to Plato in this matter, as indeed it could not, human nature being what it is. The Italian De Gubernatis recently prepared an edition of the *Divine Comedy* for his son, a child of twelve. I wish I had space to quote to you his preface, addressed to this little boy. De Gubernatis appears to us to have done nothing strange in setting his son to the reading of Dante. Plato is the one whose educational philosophy seems strange. The Greek child was brought up on Homer. Every well-born Anglo-Saxon child knows his Romeo and Juliet, his Shylock and Portia. The Italians at work on our railroads are said to recognize with joy when they hear it the Dantean verse. The poets of every race have sunk deep into the consciousness of the people. No other secular influence is comparable to that of the old poets. This is simply a fact of human nature; we must make our account with it as teachers of literature.

Today's poetry seems trivial. The natural eagerness of humanity to idealize life with something better than the actual facts has broken away from the trammels of verse, and has adopted the easier vehicle of prose. We are immersed in a sea of novels; we are a generation of novel readers. No student or teacher of literature can ignore this momentous fact of modern

life. Emerson, you know, read his Plato clandestinely, under his desk at school. But the average boy or girl today will read a story. To all ages the attraction of stories is irresistible. Every child will get at stories somehow. Macaulay tells us how the Catholic church uses for its advantage those primal and ineradicable impulses of humanity which the sects, to their detriment, insist on trying to repress. So must we to the aggrandizement of our influence, use and guide the novel-reading tendency, accepting as an ultimate psychic truth the principle that the appetite for fiction is natural, and that, consequently, its satisfaction in due measure is reasonable. Because I read the fiction of Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, shall I reprove my girls for reading the fiction of Ben Hur? Myself a novel reader of the very poorest sort, I observe with interest that my brethren and sisters in the English-teaching corps, are by no means all such as I, and so I gladly leave to them to tell me what recent fiction to put in the index expurgatorius, and what into my anthology. My principle is, to guide, not to forbid; to dissuade from novel reading, not by condemnation, but by persuading to better things.

Certain portions of literature are of special value in education for the reason that they are basic, that they explain a great many things in later literature. Shakespeare's phrase percolates through all subsequent writing. So does that of Milton, of Pope, of Gray, of Burns. Familiarity with Shakespeare and Bacon is a good education in literature. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is one of the great text-books of literature. Macaulay, who had read everything, seems to have had the art of remembering everything he had read. Hence his essays have a great stimulating, provoking power, and form another great text-book of literature. The modern manuals are useful only so far as they beget desire to go to originals. A communicated fact or opinion about Dryden or Swift is of no use to a youth who gets therefrom no incentive to look up Dryden and Swift. Modern essayists have taken with zeal to writing about the old authors, and some of this writing is excellent as criticism. But the knowledge which criticism imparts to a young student is

necessarily second-hand knowledge, and had better be left alone.

But what are we to do with literature in the class hour—the hour, as it is usually called, of recitation? Here we have a considerable group of pupils, to all of whom we must speak at once, or, if we speak to one, it must be in the hearing of all. The opportunity is here presented for telling interesting facts of literature, for setting forth something of the lives of the writers, for arranging them chronologically, for placing them in their historical setting, for telling what anecdotes we know about them, for reading the beautiful tributes paid by the later writers to the older ones—for doing anything, in short, that shall glorify and exalt the makers of our literature. If this sounds like recommending the practice of lecturing, please understand that formal lecturing is far from my thought. The teacher must speak from a full mind, in the conversational tone. Above all things, he must exact attention. Pupils are docile, and if you say, pay attention, they will take the attentive attitude; but the attention they seem to give is only a sham. No child can give real attention in response to a demand for it; no child can withhold attention when his curiosity is roused. If you cannot rouse his curiosity, you can get from him only a simulacrum of attention. The young men and women who give evenings to the clubs of needy, uncared-for boys and girls gathered in the college settlements in the large cities, soon learn what attention is and how it is to be secured. The boys brought in from the streets are not docile; they give no sham attention. They bring in with them all their fierce turbulence and coarse insolence. Call imperiously for attention, and you are laughed at. But they can be caught, though it puts the young gentlemen and ladies to their wit's end to accomplish this result. The simple fact is, they must be interested, or the college settlement is at once unsettled. Every teacher should take a course of college-settlement work, for teaching here has to be done on the bed-rock of reality. The spurious attention which the child habituated to school gives when his mind remains listless and wandering looks so orderly and quiet that it is often accepted by

untrained school officials as a satisfactory state of things. An ancient time when pupils contended with their teachers for the mastery, and when he was the successful teacher who kept the school still, bequeaths to us this immense respect for bare order, uniformity of movement, the outward show of control. Understand, I do not speak disrespectfully of external order; and understand also that this orderliness is not teaching, but only the groundwork, the preparation for teaching. The really interesting thing to look for in a school is the teaching; the order may be presupposed.

Now, the best way for the teacher to communicate to his pupils the lore of literature is to do it in the conversational way. I am constantly surprised to see teachers assigning lessons from a manual—a procedure which seems to aim at quelling curiosity in advance. A melancholy spectacle to me is an array of identically prepared pupils, each of whom is to deliver to all the rest what they all know already. Why not let the entire class come expectant and curious? Who will give me the philosophical justification of a method that frowns upon curiosity? You must be very exacting, not upon your pupils, but upon yourself. When attention flags, you must change your tactics. You must be full of resources. One excellent thing you may do is to read to the class something that will be good for them to hear.

And now arises the question: Can you read with expression? The first condition of success in literature teaching is that the teacher know his subject intimately and be ever engaged in coming to know it better; but the second condition is quite as cogent; it is that the literature teacher have a trained voice, capable of modulation, and an understanding of the wonderful possibilities that lie within the compass of the reader's art. The teacher who can read effectively has it in his power to recommend beautiful literature by simple reading. His advice will be supplemented by his example. In truth, his example will be far more persuasive than his exhortation. All important is it that young persons grow up with a love of good books, of the great poetry of the race. Let them enjoy that purest of sen-

suous pleasures—that pleasure which is indeed the gratification of a sense, but which, of all such gratifications, is the most mingled with spiritual elements, the delight of listening to speech that interprets their best thoughts and enkindles their highest emotions. Through the ear the soul is reached by the gentle influences that soften obdurate natures and make them susceptible of the admonitions of religion.

The bantling among the objects of scholastic training is the speaking voice. We neglect the culture of vocal expression, and we neglect the culture of the ear. We make neither effective readers nor appreciative listeners. We give our energies to composition, to the correct management of the pen, as if the pen were the great and fundamental organ of utterance. The reason of this anomaly is, of course, that pen-work is examinable, goes on record, can be lithographed and shown in limitless copies. Students can read aloud, but one at a time, and the critics must all be present at the moment. If only some Harvard committee on English would set up a phonograph and let the young gentlemen read into it! This would give us a far better conception of the collegiate taste, the collegiate appreciation of literature, than can possibly be afforded by written exercises. The truth is, the voice in reading is the only absolute gauge of culture. The singing voice reveals but little of the contents of minds. Various singers of the same song make pretty much the same impression; or, if they vary in their performance, it is mostly in technique, in matters appreciable only by trained judges; the singers make no revelation of intelligence, sympathy, appreciation. Various readers of the song, on the other hand, make as many different impressions. Technique now becomes quite subordinate. The sympathetic reader has a sympathetic way of reading. Coldness towards a piece of poetry cannot possibly disguise itself in the act of reading; nor can warmth of feeling either disguise itself there. The voice is a perfect index to the mental attitude of the reader towards the piece he reads. If he consciously or unconsciously reads for effect, his voice betrays him. If he attempts a flight beyond his intelligence, here, too, his voice utterly gives him away. You cannot conceive a flat,

unraised spirit delivering with due elevation the prologues of Henry V. No more can a shallow, untrained mind express the delicate humor of Addison, or Goldsmith, or Irving. When you have talked with a youth, and heard him read, the ceremony of written examination in literature becomes idle.

Of course I am to be understood as leaving out of the account the *timbre* of the voice—a thing too personal, too racial, too organic, to be much under the control of the individual—and also the vocal bewilderments that belong to the period of puberty. What I wish to affirm is that in vocal culture the range of the will is much greater than is usually believed, and that a wisely ordered education will bethink itself of the truth that here is a genuinely cultivable province of the spiritual nature which must not be left untilled. I cannot conceive a good teacher of literature who does not try his best to read well and to inspire his pupils also with a desire to read well.

All beautiful literature depends for its beauty as much upon its form as upon its content. Noble conceptions set forth in impressive phrase, idealized by the mystery of rhythm and measure, this it is that constitutes great and memorable literature. And the arbiter of literary form is solely the ear. The primeval poets thought of man as a listener. The listening ear caught the cadence, the artistic succession of longs and shorts, the swing and lilt of the verse. The modern man reads with his eye, needing the intervention of no rhapsode. But consider that the silent reader, with his inner ear, ever listens. The cultivated reader enjoys the melody of verse as much as if he had an interpreter to speak with audible voice to his sense. It is impossible to read verse with the eye, with the intellect, alone: the inner ear listens to its movement, and perceives how it sounds. The great, the lasting, the impressive quality of verse is settled by the verdict of the ear. As we cannot close the organ of hearing to the sounds of the external world, so we cannot close the inner ear to the rhythmic harmonies of language that we read in silence with the eye. He only can love literature to whom it sounds beautiful.

As teachers, therefore, we must aim to train the ear. We

must secure our pupils against the danger of scanning "with Midas' ears, committing short and long." Peculiarly maladroit, lamentably ill-educated is he who reads verse as prose, thinking solely of the syntax. If our youth are to acquire respect for English literature, they must be accustomed to hearing it well pronounced; they must have acquired an ear for fine hearing and a voice for fine speaking. We must seek to train their ear by addressing it again and again in tones that by their just modulations shall render and interpret the beauty, the nobility, of the great literature. Quite simply, we must be good readers and know how to make good readers.

Let me say, in conclusion, that apart from the negations on which I have insisted, the secret of success in teaching literature depends, first, on the possession of a considerable acquaintance with literature, and, secondly, on the ability to render the great passages lovingly and impressively with the voice. Both intellectually and æsthetically, the teacher must be an accomplished person.

SAMUEL THURBER